

CPYRGHT

Plan Omega

Plan Omega is in operation. The first major offensive for the liberation of Cuba since the Bay of Pigs struck the sugar mill at Pilon Wednesday, destroying the plant and about a third of the season's production of sugar there. The ultimate showdown with Fidel Castro which was apparent two weeks ago [Editorial, April 30] is here.

But this showdown is to be quite different from the Bay of Pigs. The strike against Pilon is the kind of action to expect; within the next few weeks there will be many more Pilon: small guerrilla forces swooping down from the mountains, touch-and-go invasion craft based in Central America, assisted by spontaneous aid from peasants who no doubt have been trained by the underground. The strikes will be made against diverse targets, faster than Castro can deploy his militiamen.

The sabotage is being directed within Cuba by Manolo Ray, an architect-engineer who directed the anti-Batista underground at a time when he was supervising such projects as the construction of the Havana Hilton. Ray's exact whereabouts are presently unknown although there is no doubt that he has been in Cuba for at least three weeks. Last Tuesday Ray's position as exile chief in Miami was assumed by Rogelio Cisneros. Ray is no longer in exile.

At no time have the prospects for the overthrow of Castro been more favorable. The Soviet troops have been withdrawn, and the Cuban population is seething. Clothes, food, and medicine have all but disappeared. In Havana, water supplies are cut off eight hours a day, and electricity is rationed. Refugees arrive daily in Miami to escape the forced-labor draft, and they tell of churches packed daily to overflowing, to flout the atheistic regime.

Last week Castro executed two army captains who allowed their regiments to desert to the freedom fighters in the hills. And Raul Castro has not been seen since he announced the draft last November. Rumor says that

he was killed out of revenge, when he had his top-communist brother-in-law Rivero Pupo liquidated. Castro floats along supported only by the scum which he dredged up from the depths of society.

And who sanctions the exile attacks? Who supplies the arms and ammunition, which are supposedly of the finest? Who supports the wives and children of the commandoes? Few observers imagine that it is anyone but the government of the United States, of course. Plan Omega is by all indications a CIA operation, organized jointly with the State Department.

For two weeks U. S. spokesmen have been preparing the alibi. Secretary Rusk, Undersecretary Ball, Undersecretary Harriman, Undersecretary Mann have all been demanding a renewal of economic blockade of Cuba. They have emphasized the strength of Castro and the impossibility of invasion, and have warned the Cuban exiles that no raids will be countenanced from U. S. territory. The Voice of America emphatically repeated it all after the attack on Pilon. And yesterday, the U. S. Department of Commerce, for no reason at all, suddenly decided it wanted a close accounting of all drugs and medicines shipped to Cuba.

It is almost a certainty that no Americans will appear in the exile raids, and no expeditions will leave from American territory. The U. S. wants to be dissociated officially with the plan, probably to avoid embarrassing the Soviet Union. The Cuban exiles, for their part, will want to control as much of their own destiny as they can; with all gratitude, they will never fully trust the U. S. again. Nevertheless Americans will be relieved that their government is doing something at last. Not only has Castro been a subversive force in the Caribbean, but our toleration of his regime has been a moral error sapping the strength of our foreign policy. With Plan Omega, the Red star over Cuba begins to decline.